

Today's News - Monday, February 2, 2015

- ArcSpace brings us eyefuls of Holl's watercolors, "an important reminder of just how much you can do with the simplest of means"; and Tezuka Architects' Fuji Kindergarten in Tokyo.
- Baillieu's argument that "monographs contribute to the marginalization of the profession" is sure to raise eyebrows - and (likely strident) debate (her point of reference is the Soane Museum's show "Building a Dialogue").
- Anderton offers very thoughtful takes on the demise of Architecture For Humanity: "it certainly does not represent the end of architects trying to serve 'humanity.' But it does raise the question of how to viably serve the underserved."
- Stott is equally as thoughtful: "Though the name and its work will live on in the chapters around the world, AfH's true legacy will be how they helped change the landscape of architectural culture."
- Bevan cheers a few of London's activist architects who have "begun to kick back at the bubble-shaped (and often bubble-headed) digital creations of their globalizing predecessors" with a "commitment to people's needs rather than stroking their own egos by building a stylistic brand."
- A Vietnam-based architect's quest for low-cost housing: a "simple abode designed to withstand typhoons, flooding and earthquakes - and at a cost of less than \$4,000 - could herald a new wave of cheap, sustainable housing."
- MIT's Vale and Shamsuddin examine the disconnect between varying definitions of "mixed income" housing, "which, though widely used, is rarely defined - many kinds of communities have been too easily lumped together under the same term."
- RAIC's newly-installed President Oboh calls for government buildings that don't look cheap: "if many buildings in Ottawa don't meet public expectation of grandeur, don't heap the blame on the government - we must all share the blame."
- Rosenbaum weighs in once again on the "Goshen commotion," and "Kimmelman's belated, muddled plea to save Paul Rudolph's masterpiece."
- Woodman is "less than impressed" with Foster's Evans Hall at Yale (though it's not all the architect's fault): it "feels awfully like it belongs in a business park," though "things improve markedly once you get past the building's front door" (he gives the "interior a B+, the outside a borderline fail").
- The Governor-General of Australia opens Gehry's University of Technology Sydney building: "Most beautiful squashed brown paper bag I've ever seen" ("It's a container, maybe it's a brown paper bag, but it is flexible on the inside," sayeth Gehry).
- Meanwhile, scheduled to be completed last November, only the stretch of Sydney's \$10m pedestrian/cycle Goods Line in front of Gehry's UTS "paper bag" building is ready to strut its stuff.
- Also in Sydney, Seidler's 1977 Sydney MLC Centre is set to "undergo a major redevelopment that will see its architect's original designs advanced" that will be in keeping with his "public space-focused designs."
- Litt lauds the preliminary vision for the East Side Greenway plan that uses "new planning methods that attempt to quantify the potential impact of public investments on public health, crime and perceptions of safety, social connectedness...communities have become willing to overcome earlier hesitation over connecting racially and economically diverse areas with bike lanes and other recreational pathways."
- Gardner has an interesting Q&A with Calatrava, "the symphonist of steel," about the WTC transit hub and building in NYC: "it is hard to draw from him a critical word about New York City or its architecture" (why are we not surprised?).
- Lamster offers an in-depth - and totally fascinating - tale of sculptor-turned-architect Robert Bruno, who "labored for decades to build one of America's most striking houses, but died before he could complete it. Is there a way to preserve his work and legacy?" (an amazing story - and pix!)
- The Château de Fontainebleau "aims to rival Versailles" with a €115m, 12-year overhaul.

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-- Steven Holl: Watercolors: ...an important reminder of just how much you can do with the simplest of means. Holl's watercolors has become his signature...
-- Tezuka Architects: Fuji Kindergarten, Tokyo [image library]

Architecture is the loser if we censor history: Monographs contribute to the marginalisation of the profession: ...in their bid for fame and fortune they edit out the difficult bits. This is partly because they believe that keeping their business model, technology and processes under wraps gives them a competitive advantage. It's also because architecture is not interested in why projects fail. By Amanda Baillieu- BD/Building Design (UK)

DnA/Frances Anderton: Why Architecture For Humanity Will Survive The Demise of 'Architecture For Humanity': While the sudden closure of such an idealistic organization...is a painful end...it certainly does not represent the end of architects trying to serve "humanity"...But it does raise the question of how to viably serve the underserved. Read on for some answers. -- Cameron Sinclair; Kate Stohr; Shigeru Ban; Mohammed Rezwan/Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha; Toyo Ito/Home-For-All; a; Kunlé Adeyemi- KCRW (Los Angeles)

Design Like You Give a Damn: The Legacy of Architecture for Humanity: ...if [it] was such a figurehead for the burgeoning movement of socially-conscious design, why the bankruptcy? The answer might lie, paradoxically, precisely in this success...AfH ultimately sacrificed itself for a greater goal. Though the name and its work will live on in the chapters around the world, the true legacy will be how they helped change the landscape of architectural culture. By Rory Stott -- Cameron Sinclair; Kate Stohr- ArchDaily

Meet the activist architects: why young designers in London are going back to basics: ...inventing new ways of working and inspiring a building revolution...begun to kick back at the bubble-shaped (and often bubble-headed) digital creations of their globalising predecessors...commitment to people's needs rather than stroking their own egos by building a stylistic brand...their choices have not so much been driven by a changed economy as a desire for a new vision. By Robert Bevan -- Assemble; Studio Weave; Architecture 00- Evening Standard (UK)

Home cheap home: Vietnam architect's quest for low-cost housing: ...simple abode is designed to withstand typhoons, flooding and earthquakes - and at a cost of less than \$4,000 could herald a new wave of cheap, sustainable housing...(AFP) -- Vo Trong Nghia Architects [image]- GMA News (Philippines)

Mixed income public housing: mixed outcomes, mixed-up concept: A key area of contention has to do with the term "mixed-income" -- which, though widely used, is rarely defined...many kinds of communities have been too easily lumped together under the same term. By Lawrence Vale and Shomon Shamsuddin/Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)- The Conversation

A call for government buildings that don't look cheap: ...new president of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada says if many buildings in Ottawa don't meet public expectation of grandeur, don't heap the blame on the government. Samuel Oboh says we must all share the blame. By Mohammed Adam- Ottawa Citizen (Canada)

Goshen Commotion: Michael Kimmelman's Belated, Muddled Plea to Save Paul Rudolph's Masterpiece: Orange County Government Center, Goshen, NY...He has thrown his weight behind an offer by Gene Kaufman,/Gwathmey Siegel Kaufman Architects, to buy Rudolph's building...[He] inadvertently undermines his own credibility by muddling his facts at the end of his article... By Lee Rosenbaum -- Robin Pogrebin; Paul Goldberger; James S. Russell [images, video]- ArtsJournal

Edward P Evans Hall at Yale University by Foster + Partners: Ellis Woodman is less than impressed with the results: "...feels awfully like it belongs in a business park. That lack of urban vitality is not entirely of Foster's making...things improve markedly once you get past the building's front door...has radically transformed the school's pedagogical culture...This critic gives the interior a B+, the outside a borderline fail. -- Olin [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove opens Frank Gehry's UTS structure: "Most beautiful squashed brown paper bag I've ever seen": "...one of the most hotly debated pieces of architecture since designs were unveiled in 2010...has been panned by some as ugly, impractical and even bad Gaudi..."It's a container, maybe it's a brown paper bag, but it is flexible on the inside. There's a lot of room for change and movement which I think in the world today is essential," said Gehry. -- Gehry Partners; Daryl Jackson Robin Dyke [images]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Sydney's \$10m Goods Line not ready for Frank Gehry's University of Technology Sydney building: "...pedestrian and cycle network...will miss the opening of UTS building Monday...initially scheduled for completion...in time for the official 'paper bag' building opening...section directly outside Gehry's building will be ready by Monday. -- Aspect Studios; Choi Ropiha Fighere [images]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Designs unveiled for Harry Seidler's [1977] Sydney MLC Centre revival: "...once the world's tallest concrete office building outside North America...to undergo a major redevelopment that will see its architect's original designs advanced...In keeping with Seidler's public space-focused designs, 80% of the site's footprint will be activated to contribute to a vibrant and diverse CBD community. -- Harry Seidler & Associates; Woods Bagot [images]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Preliminary version of East Side Greenway plan ready for public reaction: The project is one of the first in Cuyahoga County to use new planning methods that attempt to quantify the potential impact of public investments on public health, crime and perceptions of safety, social connectedness, economic opportunity and other factors...communities have become willing to overcome earlier hesitation over connecting racially and economically diverse areas with bike lanes and other recreational pathways... By Steven Litt -- LAND Studio; SmithGroup JJR [images]- Cleveland Plain Dealer

Santiago Calatrava, the symphonist of steel: A conversation with the architect of the WTC transit hub: "...it is hard to draw from him a critical word about New York City or its architecture..."In Manhattan there is ... a culture of construction that permits the exception to occur." By James Gardner - The Real Deal (NYC)

Unfinished: Robert Bruno labored for decades to build one of America's most striking houses, but died before he could complete it. Is there a way to preserve his work and legacy? Though Bruno will forever be identified as the designer of the Steel House, he came to architecture by accident...a means of developing his ideas in that medium at a habitable scale. By Mark Lamster [images]- Dallas Morning News

Battle royale: Fontainebleau aims to rival Versailles after €115m funding boost: The French stately home Bonaparte called "the true abode of kings" is about to get a 12-year overhaul- The Art Newspaper (UK)

Inexhaustible Nostalgia, Inexhaustible Shocks of the New: How to Navigate Through a Fake Controversy: A path to avoid the quagmire of architecture's style wars...During my proposed "time out" to retire the word "style" -- let's dive into the depths of the word "cost." And I'm not just talking about money. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow.com

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